

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 10254 01 OF 03 110007Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----035331 110019Z /62
O 102302Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4809
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 TEL AVIV 10254

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 & 2
TAGS: PBOR, MARR, MILI, UNSC, IS, LE, XF
SUBJECT: EITAN'S COMMENTS ON AUGUST 9 MEETING WITH ERSKINE

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 2221; (B) USUN 3150; (C) TEL AVIV 10253
(D) BEIRUT 4632

1. COLONEL WILLIAMS MET WITH CHEIF OF STAFF EITAN FROM 9 P.M. TO 10 P.M. AUGUST 10. EITAN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DMI GAZIT AND TWO AIDES. DISCUSSION WAS IN ENGLISH EXCEPT FOR EITAN'S SUMMARY WHICH GAZIT TRANSLATED, POINT BY POINT, AS FOLLOWS:

A. GOI HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF A LEBANESE ARMY BATTALION IN TIBNIN

B. ON THE OTHER HAND, NEITHER GOI OR IDF IS GOING TO FORCE REPEAT FORCE THE CHRISTIANS TO BEHAVE AGAINST WHAT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE TO BE RIGHT FOR THEM" WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO CONVINCE THEM NOT TO FIRE, BUT WE WILL NOT FORCE THEM."

C. BECAUSE OF THE IDF KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON AND OF ALL LOCAL ELEMENTS IN THE AREA, GOI HAD URGED THE GOL NOT TO BE OBSTINATE AND NOT TO TRY AND MOVE THROUGH THE ENCLAVES."

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 10254 01 OF 03 110007Z

UNFORTUNATELY OUR PROPHECY CAME TRUE."

D. IF THE GOL MOVES THE BATTALION OR PARTS OF IT (BY HELICOPTER)

THE GOI CANNOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AIRSPACE IN LEBANON AND FOR (THE SECURITY OF) HELICOPTERS IN THAT AIRSPACE. THE IDF CAN BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT "NOT ONE BULLET" WILL BE FIRED FROM ISRAEL. IF THE GOI ATTEMPTED TO GIVE THE ASSURANCE THAT NO FIRE

WOULD COME FROM THE ENCLAVES AND PERSUADED HADDAD TO "GIVE HIS WORD OF HONOR", HADDAD WOULD GO TO ONE OF HIS CATTERED ELEMENTS AND TELL THEM TO SHOOT, LATER CLAIMING HE CANNOT CONTROL ALL "CRAZY" ELEMENTS. E. NO ONE SHOULD HAVE THE ILLUSION THAT HADDAD, SHIDIAK OR ZAATER HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THEIR FIGHTERS. IF ONE OF THESE COMMANDERS DECIDES TO DO SOMETHING SOME OF HIS MEN DON'T AGREE WITH, WHAT HE DECIDED IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. IN THE WESTERNMOST ENCLAVE, CURRENTLY COMMANDED BY ZAATER (SHIDIAK IS SICK AND IN HOSPITAL), IDF BELIEVES ORDERS FROM PHALANGIST PARTY IN BEIRUT ARE BEING ISSUED WHICH COULD RESULT IN FIRE BEING DIRECTED AGAINST LEBANESE BATTALION IF IT MOVED INTO TIBNIN.

F. (EITAN IN ENGLISH). THE PEOPLE IN THE ENCLAVES HAVE "BLOWN THEIR BRIDGES" BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE MOSLEMS IN LEBANON AND IN THE ARAB WORLD BECAUSE OF THEIR COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL - AND BECAUSE OF THAT COOPERATION THEY ARE NOW ALIVE. THEY HAVE TWO CHOICES: (A) TO FIGHT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO STAY INDEPENDENT AND ALIVE; (B) TO COME TO ISRAEL AS REFUGEES. A THIRD CHOICE IS UNACCEPTABLE "BECAUSE IT MEANS SLAUGHTER. THERE IS NO CHANCE FOR A RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE (FOR THE CHRISTIANS) WITH THE MOSLEMS IN LEBANON. NO CHANCE. IN CASE OF A COLLAPSE, ABOUT 30,000 WILL COME TO ISRAEL AS REFUGEES".

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 10254 02 OF 03 110022Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----035550 110034Z /62

O 102302Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4810
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 TEL AVIV 10254

EXDIS

9. AT SUGGESTION OF (BRIG. GEN.) CUQ, IDF HAD REQUESTED MEETING WITH LEBANESE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF BRIG. GEN. TARABAUI WHEN AND WHERE HE WANTS IN ORDER TO DISCUSS SITUATION IN SOUTH. NO ANSWER TO DATE.

2. WHEN DISCUSSING ALTERNATE LAND ROUTE THROUGH NABATAYYA AND AVOIDING ENCLAVES, GAZIT SAID THAT IF SYRIANS COULD OPEN ROAD FOR LEBANESE ARMY BATTALION TO KAWKABA, WHY COULDN'T IT DO SO ON ALTERNATE ROUTE. WILLIAMS IMMEDIATELY ASKED FOR DETAILED EXPLANATION,

SPECIFICALLY CONCERNING MOVEMENT OF SYRIANS SOUTH OF "RED LINE". GAZIT REPEATED EARLIER STATEMENT, ADDING "AND HAND THEM OVER TO UNIFIL AT THE AKIA BRIDGE". HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOI HAD NEVER SAID IT OBJECTED TO SYRIAN MOVES SOUTH OF THE RED LINE - IT OBJECTS TO UNCOORDINATED MOVES". HE WENT ON THAT HE COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE GOI AND THUS COULD NOT CONCUR IN A SYRIAN ESCORT AT THIS TIME BUT "IF YOU OR UNIFIL NOTIFY US THAT SYRIANS ARE GOING TO ESCORT TO THE LITANI AND THEN IMMEDIATELY MOVE BACK I BELIEVE THE GOI WILL NOT OBJECT". EITAN IMMEDIATELY SAID "ME TOO".

3. EITAN MADE FOLLOWING POINTS REGARDING HIS TWO HOUR AUGUST 9
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 10254 02 OF 03 110022Z

MEETING WITH ERSKINE AND CUQ:

A. MAJORITY REPEAT MAJORITY OF MEETING DEVOTED TO METHOD OF FLYING COMPANY BY HELICOPTER INTO TIBNIN. EITAN SUGGESTED NIGHT MOVE WITHOUT NAVIGATION LIGHTS IF LEBANESE PILOTS ARE QUALIFIED. ALTERNATE IS FLYING IN LITANI GORGE WHICH HE BELIEVES IS TOO DANGEROUS.

(HE TOLD WILLIAMS THAT AT THIS POINT CUQ "GOT VERTIGO" AND NO LONGER SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND OR BE INTERESTED IN MEETING.)

B. EITAN INSISTS THAT AT NO TIME DID HE STATE IN ANY WAY THAT HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE FOR GOL TO POSTPONE MOVE. HE INSISTED MEETING WAS PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO FLY THEM IN.

C. EITAN SAID BEN GAL GAVE HIS OPINION THAT HE BELIEVED CHRISTIANS IN ENCLAVES MIGHT FIRE ON LEBANESE FORCE IN TIBNIN, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN WEST. "THE PHALANGISTS ENCLAVE (SHIDIK/ZAATER) IS LESS DISCIPLINED THAN HADDAD'S."

D. EITAN SAYS HE TOLD ERSKINE THAT "THE ONLY THING I CAN PROMISE IS TO MAKE OUR UTMOST EFFORT TO KEEP THE CHRISTIANS IN BINT JAIL QUIET AND NOT TO SHOOT AT TIBNIN.

E. ERSKINE SAID THAT LEBANESE UNIT IN TIBNIN WOULD BE LIKE A UNIFIL UNIT AND WOULD BE CONTROLLED AND NOT ALLOWED TO CHALLENGE ENCLAVES.

F. AFTER MEETING, CUQ WAS CORNERED BY CAPTAIN GEORGE ZAATAR, WESTERN ENCLAVE COMMANDER (VICE SHIDIK) AND WAS TOLD, VERY EMOTIONALLY, THAT IF UNIFIL INTENDS TO BRING LEBANESE ARMY TO TIBNIN, CHRISTIANS WOULD FIRE "AND NOBODY IN WORLD WILL STOP US". WILLIAMS ASKED EITAN WHAT CONTROL IDF HAD OVER ZAARAR AND EITAN SAID IT WAS BASICALLY SAME AS THAT OVER HADDAD, BUT VERY COMPLICATED DUE TO ORDERS FROM PHALANGISTS IN BEIRUT.

4. COMMENT. MOST IMPORTANT RESULT OF THIS MEETING CONCERNS

APPARENT GOI WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW SYRIAN ESCORT OF LEBANESE SOUTH
USING NABATIYYA ROUTE IF GOL CAN PERSUADE SYRIANS TO DO SO. WE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 10254 02 OF 03 110022Z

ARE NOT AT ALL SURE OF LEBANESE NIGHT FLYING QUALIFICATIONS BUT
WILLIAMS KNOWS THE TERRAIN AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TERRAIN FLYING
FOR ANY PILOT WITHOUT SOPHISTICATED NIGHT VISION DEVICES. EITAN
WAS COOL AND CALM WHILE REPEATEDLY EMPHASING THAT ONLY LIMITED
CONTROL IS EXERCISED OVER CHRISTIANS BY IDF AND GOI.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 10254 03 OF 03 110023Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----035476 110035Z /62
O 102302Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4811
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 TEL AVIV 10254

EXDIS

AS FAR AS THE TWO VERSIONS (REF A. AND EITAN'S) OF THE MEETING
ARE CONCERNED, IT WOULD INITIALLY APPEAR THAT EITAN BELIEVES -
OR AT LEAST TOLD WILLIAMS - THAT HE WAS TRYING TO ADVISE
CAUTION IN A HELICOPTER MOVE, BUT DID NOT OPPOSE IT. IF THIS
TRUE, WE CANNOT EXPLAIN WHY ERSKINE'S REPORT DOES NOT MENTION HELICOP-
TERS.

I BELIEVE BEIRUT SHOULD GO BACK TO BUTROS AND CLARIFY SOME OF THE
ELEMENTS OF REF D. IN LIGHT OF EITAN'S COMMENTS. PERHAPS WITH
THIS INFORMATION WE CAN CONVINCE THE GOL TO MOVE ITS FORCE BY
ROAD VIA NABITAYYA OR BY HELICOPTER TO TIBNIN.
LEWIS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV10254
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 & 2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780328-0503
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780876/aaaaclo.tel
Line Count: 224
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b1b85b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 JERUSALEM 2221, 78 USUN NEW YORK 3150, 78 TEL AVIV 10253, 78 BEIRUT 4632
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1774459
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EITAN\ S COMMENTS ON AUGUST 9 MEETING WITH ERSKINE
TAGS: PBOR, MARR, MILI, IS, LE, XF, UNSC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b1b85b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014